

Andrew Jackson to John Sevier, March 27, 1802, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO JOHN SEVIER.¹

¹ The major-general of militia was chosen by the field officers. When the election was held in February, 1802, Jackson and Sevier each received seventeen votes and Brigadier-General Winchester received three. Governor Roane cast the deciding vote for Jackson. The friends of Sevier were much chagrined, and got through the legislature, Nov. 5, 1803, a bill to create two militia districts, one in East and one in West Tennessee. Jackson was now made commander-in-chief over the second of these districts.

Knoxville, March 27, 1802

D'r Sir , Yours by Major Crosier of this days date is now before me, and the contents duly observed, I have to answer, That had I stepped forward of my own accord and offered as a candidate for Major General of the State of Tennessee unsolicited, and soliciting the suffrage of the constituted authorities, I should have held myself at full liberty to meet you on the ground proposed, and readily agree to the withdrawing of our names and submit to another election. But Sir, situated as I am, my name brought forward by the military officers, as a candidate for that appointment, and when I suggested reason why my name should not be held up, answered, "that in a republican Government, when the services of any individual was called upon, his services belonged to the republick, and he ought to obey the Publick will", I was silenced, and the Respect I owe to my friends and the Publick will, is a sufficient reason to acquiesce under the constituted will, and that must decide, inasmuch as I do not think myself, (from the stand I have taken) authorised to take any step in the thing proposed by you, least I should thwart the wishes of my friends, which no

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consideration, under present circumstances would authorise, (let my private feelings be what the[y] may). I informed you with candeur at Jonesborough and let me here repeat, that so little pains was taken by me on the subject that I was not even at Nashville on the day of election, nor did I write but one solitary letter on the subject, purport of which was in case my name was held up as a candidate to make it known to those he thought proper; unless one I wrote expressive of my wishes that my name should not be held up as a candidate for reasons therein assigned to General Winchester in answer to his dictated by the will of a majority of the officers of the District of Mero. from this candid explanation and declaration you will readily see the impropriety of meeting you on the ground proposed, and the Propriety of the constituted authority deciding, and will present the answer that the constituted authority must descide—and rest assured, let descision be as it may it will meet my wishes. with high consideration and respect I have the honour to be your mo. ob. serv.²

² Jackson's earliest military career and his election as major-general of militia are discussed in Bassett's *Jackson*, I. 73–76. His difference with Sevier, which had been smoothed out in 1797, was now reopened and carried on more violently than ever before.